

Alamo Lake Elk Hunt Area

Elk within the Alamo Lake Hunt area are primarily located in the river bottoms of the lower portions of the Big Sandy and Santa Maria River and the portion of the Bill Williams River above Alamo Lake. The river bottoms are wide and dominated by dense thickets of cottonwood, willow, mesquite, and salt cedar trees. Depending on the width there may be multiple stream channels that may or may not contain either flowing water or moist soil conditions. Elk may be found traveling short distances up the larger drainages flowing into the Big Sandy or Santa Maria rivers. Elk have existed in this area for more than 10 years and are found here year long – even during our hot summers.

The primary access to these areas is the paved Alamo Lake road beginning in Wenden. Wenden is located on US Highway 60 about 45 miles west of Wickenburg. To access the rivers from the Alamo road take the Wayside Inn road to the Wayside Inn. Direct access to the Santa Maria is the Three Rivers road and the road crossing Date Creek. This road begins about a quarter mile east of the Wayside Inn. Hunters may drive Date Creek to the Santa Maria. Some hunters have had success locating elk from the higher bluffs along the south side of the river. Elk have been located as far up the Santa Maria as the Palmerita ranch. There is a quad road paralleling the south bank of the Santa Maria that actually joins on its western end with a road that eventually joins with the Brown's Crossing road. Motorized vehicle travel is allowed in the Santa Maria upstream from Date Creek.

The primary access to the upper Bill Williams and lower Big Sandy is off the Brown's Crossing road to the road that ends at the gauging station located at the confluence of the Big Sandy and Santa Maria. Depending on river flows quads can travel in the upper Bill Williams and up the Big Sandy. Travel up the Big Sandy is limited to about a mile to the Wilderness boundary. Elk do tend to center their activity in the vicinity of the gauging station.

Recent rainfall has significantly increased runoff in these rivers (Alamo Lake has come up more than 6 feet) and motorized travel may not be possible. After runoff events there are sink holes and muddy conditions. Even during low flows many portions of these rivers will have surface water or very moist soil conditions. As of the end of January 2008 we know of at least 4 elk that have been killed. Elk numbers are estimated to be around 50. Small groups of 3 or 4 elk have been located throughout the area identified in the map with the largest reported at 14. Hunting is difficult at best due to the dense vegetation. Hunters unfamiliar with the area are encouraged to use GPS to mark their vehicle or even where they accessed the river to assist in finding their way back out of the rivers.

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